RSS01.B1 Interpretive Research Methods Detailed program

The course will cover the basic techniques for collecting, interpreting, and presenting analyses. Throughout the course we will operate on two interrelated dimensions, one focused on the methodological approaches to various types of interpretive research, the other focused on the practical techniques of data collection, coding strategies and interpretive strategies of analysis, writing, and presenting findings. Methodological, the course considers questions such as the following: What is 'interpretive' research? What questions is it best suited for? By what criteria does it meet or fail to meet the standards of scientific evidence? What are the roles of concepts in interpretive research? Can interpretive methods verify hypotheses, or only generate them? Can interpretive research explain social phenomena, or only describe them? Do interpretive analyses have a small-N problem? In what ways is interpretive research "grounded"? Practically, the course considers questions such as the following: What scientific criteria apply for interpretive methods? How do researchers ask the 'right' question to the 'right' material? What collecting techniques can be used to enhance the quality of the material? What interpretive position should ground the research? What is the unit of analysis? How do researchers organize the material and how do they 'read' it? How can they make sense of their interpretations in a transparent, authentic, and inclusive way? And how can they draw conclusions from their interpretive analyses?

The course introduces a broad spectrum of interpretive approaches; however, the methodological focus will be on narrative method and discourse analysis. The explicit focus on these two approaches is chosen to expose students to methods which put rather different weight on inductive and deductive strategies of interpretation. This is expected to strengthen students' general knowledge on interpretive methods as well as to give them a solid basis to choose the 'right' strategy of interpretation of their material.

After the course students will have a basic knowledge of how to choose between interpretive methods, including insight into hands-on tools that can be used during an interpretive research process.

Day-per-day-content:

1. Introduction to interpretive methodology, interpretive research questions and material selection for interpretive research.

2. Narrative methods and hermeneutical methodology, including methods of interpreting representations in trustworthy ways.

3. Critical text analysis, reading and coding strategies from a deductive approach.

4. Critical discourse analysis of different types of social constructed texts,

5. Transparent presentation of (large amounts of texts and deep analyses) interpretive results, and course summary. There will be daily group exercises and presentations.